What is claimed is:

1. A computer-related product user management and service system which manages a user of software and hardware as a computer-related product, and provides the user with an appropriate service, comprising:

user information general management means, provided on a system manager side, for generally managing user registration information and using status information transmitted from a user of the computer-related product ; and

user registration/reference means, provided on a user side of the computer-related product, for notifying said user information general management means of the user registration information and the using status information at a request of the user who receives a service according to the user registration information and the using status information.

2. The system according to claim 2, wherein said user registration/reference means requests at a request from the user said user information general management means to provide new information about the computer-related product from a vendor side of the computer-related product.

3. The system according to claim 2, wherein

said computer-related product is a software product, and said user registration/reference means is commonly provided for, and as part of, each of a
5 plurality of software products; and

when any software product of the plurality of the products is installed, the user registration/reference means as part of the any software product are also installed; and thereafter said user
10 registration/reference means issues a notification about the user registration information and using status information for the plurality of software products which are included in the software products, and realizes a request for new information about the
15 software product.

4. The system according to claim 2, wherein

said user registration information comprises:

personal information about each user containing
20 an identification number of each user; and

registration information containing a type of information requested by the user about a computer-related product; and

said user information general management means
25 extracts the new information depending on information

43

extraction condition containing a requested information type in the registration information at a request for new information about a computer-related product from said user registration/reference means, and transmits the new information to said user registration/reference means.

5.   The system according to claim 2, wherein said computer-related product is a software product and said using status information contains the number of times of starting up of the software product; and

said user information general management means transmits new information about the software product to said user registration/reference means depending on notified contents about the number of times of starting up of the software product.

6.   The system according to claim 2, wherein said computer-related product is a software product and said using status information contains the number of times of starting up of the software product; and

said user registration/reference means requests said user information general management means to

provide new information about the software product when the number of times of starting up of the software product has reached a value predetermined for a software product.

7. The system according to claim 2, further comprising on a vendor side of said computer-related product:

vendor registration/reference means for obtaining the user registration information and the using status information provided for said user information general management means, and notifying said user information general management means of new information about the computer-related product.

8. The system according to claim 7, wherein

said user registration information contains a type of information requested by a user about a computer-related product;

said vendor registration/reference means specifies a type of new information when the new information about the computer-related product is notified of; and

said user information general management means compares the type of information requested by the user

with the type specified by the vendor registration/reference means, and when both types coincide, transmits the new information to said user registration/reference means at a request from said user registration/reference means.

9. The system according to claim 8, wherein one type of said information refers to information about a linking operation with a computer-related product provided by another vendor.

10. A management apparatus which manages user information about a computer-related product provided by a user terminal connected through a network, comprising:

user information general management means for managing using status information provided by the user terminal about a product owned by a user;

product information management means for managing product information provided by a vendor of the computer-related product; and

product information notification means for referring to a product owned by each user managed by said user information general management means at a product information reference request from the user

terminal, and for providing product information managed by said product information management means about a product owned by a user.

5   11.   A computer-readable storage medium used to direct a computer to perform the functions of:

managing using status information provided by the user terminal about a product owned by a user;

managing product information provided by the
10   computer-related product vendor; and

referring to a product owned by each user managed by said using status information managing function at a product information reference request from the user terminal, and providing product information managed
15   by said product information managing function about a product owned by a user.

12.   A user terminal apparatus, provided at a user side of a computer-related product, for receiving an
20   appropriate service from a vendor, comprising:

user information notification means for notifying an external unit of user registration information and using status information about the computer-related product; and
25   product   information   reference   means   for

requesting an external unit for new information about the computer-related product from a computer-related product vendor.

5   13. A computer-readable storage medium used to direct a computer to perform the functions of:

notifying an external unit of user registration information and using status information about the computer-related product; and

10   requesting an external unit for new information about the computer-related product from a computer-related product vendor.

14.   A vendor terminal apparatus, provided at a vendor

15   side of a computer-related product, for providing an appropriate service for a user, comprising:

user information reference means for obtaining, from an external unit, user registration information and using status information transmitted from a user

20   of the computer-related product; and

product information notification means for notifying an external unit of new information about the computer-related product.

25   15. A computer-readable storage medium used to direct

48

a computer to perform the functions of:

obtaining, from an external unit, user registration information and using status information transmitted from a user of the computer-related product; and

5

notifying an external unit of new information about the computer-related product.